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The Legend of Ochi

The Legend of Ochi (/ˈoʊtʃi/) is a 2025 American fantasy adventure film written and directed by Isaiah Saxon in his feature film debut. The film stars Helena Zengel, Finn Wolfhard, Emily Watson, and Willem Dafoe.

It was released in the United States by A24 in limited theaters on April 18, 2025, before a wide release on April 25.

Premise

In a secluded northern village on the island of Carpathia, a farm girl named Yuri is taught to not go outside after dark and to fear the reclusive creatures known as the Ochi. But when she discovers a lost and injured baby Ochi, she sets off on a journey to return it to its family.[6]

Cast

- Helena Zengel as Yuri
- Willem Dafoe as Maxim
- Finn Wolfhard as Petro
- Emily Watson as Dasha

Production

On November 10, 2021, it was reported that Isaiah Saxon would write and direct *The Legend of Ochi*, a fantasy adventure film based on his own original story, and starring Willem Dafoe, Emily Watson, Finn Wolfhard, and Helena Zengel, with A24 fully financing and serving as worldwide distributor.[7][8]

Some scenes of the film were shot in Transylvania, in the Apuseni Mountains, at the Bâlea Lake and on the Transfăgărăşan road. Principal photography started in

The Legend of Ochi

Theatrical release poster

Directed by	Isaiah Saxon
Written by	Isaiah Saxon
Produced by	Richard Peete Traci Carlson Isaiah Saxon Jonathan Wang
Starring	Helena Zengel Finn Wolfhard Emily Watson Willem Dafoe
Cinematography	Evan Prosofsky
Edited by	Paul Rogers
Music by	David Longstreth
Production companies	AGBO Encyclopedia Pictura

Romania on November 1, 2021, and continued at the Castel Film Studios until December 15, 2021.[9][10] The film makes use of puppetry, animatronics, computer animation and matte paintings. The titular creature was a puppet, operated by 7 performers. The film had a budget of $10 million.[11][12]

	Neighborhood Watch
	Year of the Rat[1]
Distributed by	A24
Release dates	January 26, 2025 (Sundance)
	April 18, 2025 (United States)
Running time	95 minutes[2]
Country	United States
Language	English
Budget	$10 million[3]
Box office	$1.5 million[4][5]

Release

The Legend of Ochi premiered at the Sundance Film Festival on January 26, 2025.[6] It had a wide theatrical release in the United States on April 25, 2025,[13] following a limited release in New York City and Los Angeles on April 18.[14] It was previously scheduled to be released on February 28, 2025, but it was delayed in January 2025 after Saxon lost his home in the Southern California wildfires.[15]

Reception

Box office

In the United States and Canada, *The Legend of Ochi* was released alongside *Until Dawn*, *The Accountant 2*, and the re-release of *Star Wars: Episode III – Revenge of the Sith*, and is projected to gross around $5 million from 1,150 theaters in its opening weekend.[3]

Critical response

On the review aggregator website Rotten Tomatoes, 80% of 86 critics' reviews are positive. The website's consensus reads: "A marvel of state-of-the-art puppetry and visual effects, *The Legend of Ochi* elevates its predictable story with enchanting presentation."[16] Metacritic, which uses a weighted average, assigned the film a score of 68 out of 100, based on 26 critics, indicating "generally favorable" reviews.[17]

Brian Tallerico of *RogerEbert.com* gave the film three out of four stars and wrote, "*The Legend of Ochi*, the rare A24 family film, is a charming throwback to adventure movies of the '80s like *The Neverending Story* and *The Dark Crystal*, complete with original puppetry that reportedly contains not an ounce of CGI manipulation".[18] Carlos Aguilar of *Variety* commented: "With unique enough lore and a unique style, Saxon avoids making a derivate fable. *Ochi* prompts one to think, 'How did they do that?' only to be even more incredulous when realizing the techniques employed. That's film sorcery".[19]

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External links

- Official website (https://a24films.com/films/the-legend-of-ochi)
- *The Legend of Ochi* (https://www.imdb.com/title/tt8866456/) at IMDb

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